

July 16, 2009

I commend the Chair of this subcommittee for producing a good bill, and I seek to enter into a colloquy with him about the importance of making voting systems auditable and about conducting audits of electronic election results.

Voting is the foundation of our democracy. It is the right through which we preserve all other rights. Anything of value should be auditable, especially our votes. That's why it is so important that States using paperless systems have all of the funding they need to convert to paper ballot voting systems before the next general election and that all States have the funding they need to conduct audits of the electronic tallies.

We have a recent compelling example of how important this is. We have the resolution of the Senate race in Minnesota. If the only information available were an electronic tally, one candidate would have been presumed the winner without recourse, but because a bipartisan canvassing board was able to inspect and recount actual voter-marked ballots, they were able to determine that the other candidate actually won. Software electronic counts alone cannot be relied upon to ensure that the intent of the voters will be honored.

In 2010, seven entire States and counties in a dozen others will not be able to verify independently the electronic tallies in their elections unless they use their HAVA funds to deploy accessible paper ballot voting systems. We have not succeeded yet in establishing a national standard.